

The Harp of Prophecy



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The Harp of Prophecy

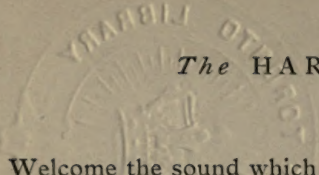


GENESIS

When time began, wild chaos held domain,
And darkness veiled our planet's foggy face,
Unformed majestic mount, or pleasing plain,
Tree, shrub or flower, or vegetable race,
No living tribes as yet were brought to grace
This orb terraqueous when in embryo hurled
From the creative hand to people space,
She round no sun in stately cycles curled,
In silent grandeur rolled the basis of a world.

Though thus left void of living sight or sound,
With darkness for her robe, supremely meet,
At length her noble waters knew their bound,
And gloom gave place to day ; Caloric heat
Fast warmed her gladdened shores ; then living feet
At the Divine command were taught to tread
The virgin earth, with blooming roses sweet,
Fowls filled the air, and fish the ocean's bed,
And first then man and woman met, and loved, and wed.

The earth thus finished, and the solar heaven,
Brief six days' effort of Almighty power,
Save for the model thus divinely given
With equal grace and ease had been an hour,
Man placed in Eden as its favoured flower,
Where grew the tree of life, and there the tree
Fatal to human bliss, whose luring bower
O'erspread the first transgressor, fair as free,
When sin brought ill to man, and doomed his good to flee.



The HARP of PROPHECY

Welcome the sound which greet the sinner's ear,
Destruction his award, his prospect woe,
Chafed with departed bliss, and quick with fear,
Clouds lower in fury on the scene below,
Hopeless he bows to Heaven's decree, when lo,
Prophecy's strange Harp in soothing tone
Awakens hope, relieves the troubled brow,
Earth, though with thistles barbed, and sorrows sown,
Man's fall shall see avenged, his victor overthrown.

Oh, Harp of Prophecy, divinely given
To cheer the the gloom of man's benighted way,
How tangible the faith, which touching heaven,
Illumes our morbid darkness into day ;
High swell the hallowed strains, until a ray
Of hope inspires the world, until the fold
Of Israel's Shepherd claims all gone astray,
Life's ills by all endured, as one of old,
The Invisible in view, and in His book enrolled.

Moved by its symphonies did Abel bring
The accepted lamb ; thus Enoch walked with God ;
And Noah could in holy triumph sing,
Safe in the ark, a world beneath the flood.
Precious those strains, assuring to the good.
See Abram's faith soar nobly o'er its test ;
Lay his own idol on the waiting wood ;
In figure from the grave again he pressed
More fond the promised child, through whom the earth is blessed.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

The covenant of Abraham ; the fear
Of Isaac ; Jacob proved his staff and stay,
Though perils thickened as they hovered near,
And doubt deterred his home-directed way ;
When faith victorious hailed a brighter day,
Since Israel found at Peniel help was nigh ;
And prompt with succour when the faithful pray ;
Fear flies as Jacob mounts the halting thigh,
He's stable as the hills whose shield is God Most High.

Attend my sons, and hear with reverence due
What shall befall you through succeeding time ;
Thus spake the dying Hebrew, as he drew
Weird from the holy Harp the solemn chime,
Parental as prophetic swells sublime ;
Twelve Patriarchs listened in a foreign land,
Borne back by memories to their native clime,
As one by one sustained the blessing hand,
Then heard with awe departing Jacob's last command.

Clogged with Egyptian night, it sounds no more,
No Seraph sweeps its strings with touching trill ;
In slaves could buoyant inspiration soar ?
Or melody resuscitate the will ?
Dejected Eber plods the weary kiln,
Hope leaves the tortured breast with piteous groan,
A heart-chilled race now Egypt's coffers fill
Reluctant ; the humbled Syrian's moan,
The sable monarch mocks in mandates from the throne.

The HARP of PROPHECY

JOB

Long though His people languish as they mourn,
JEHOVAH lacks not witnesses, nor praise,
Some Job in distant Uz, with zeal will burn,
Illuming nature's night with brilliant lays ;
Nor loss nor pain can quench the ethereal blaze ;
"I know that my Redeemer lives," he cries,
"And on the earth shall stand in later days,"
In triumph o'er the tomb, these wakened eyes
Will hail a coming God, who rules the earth and skies.

Few are the days of man, of woman born,
Fretful life's struggle on its stormy wave ;
Oft is the fairest flower in manhood shorn,
Borne in its glory to the waiting grave,
The rich, the poor, the boastful and the brave ;
Fled then the shade, till final thunders roll,
While sinners fly to rocks, or friendly cave,
And passing heavens will cinder as a scroll,
Nor ruin relic leave, save man's embodied soul.

EXODUS

Winged time had thrown its shadow o'er the past ;
Canaan was ripe for judgment, as was Ham ;
On Madian mountains Moses' lot was cast,
Expatriate from Egypt, and from fame ;
There Abraham's God revealed Himself in flame ;
Whose saints are as the apple of His eye,
Had marked their moans, and to their rescue came,
The oppressed are free, since heard their plaintive cry,
And tyrants trembling pause, when Deity is nigh.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

The modest garb of meekness well became
Mortality in converse with its God;
Learning his incommunicable Name,
Whose courts no sandaled foot has ever trod;
Who sees a serpent but a living rod,
The sane hand leprous, or the leprous sane;
Resolves a mighty river into blood,
Bids the charged elements man's wrath restrain,
When nature hears a voice which never spake in vain.

Nine scathing plagues had passed; the fated king
Would still try issues with an arm defied;
Egypt destroyed, tenacious note him cling
To shattered power, and on its ruins ride;
Insulted Heaven long bore his stoic pride,
Then struck the hour he should be warned no more;
That night the first-born through his kingdom died;
The parted sea safe-passed, its waters roar;
When Israel saw the dead of Egypt line the shore.

From hearts now jubilant, the grateful song
Is heard to mingle with the surging sea,
Praise to that Power, else whom is nothing strong,
Whose potent word proclaims the captive free,
From serfdom's bond to sonship's liberty;
How mutable is man? Oft in the maze
Of changeful time, or mystic certainty,
Apprised of good, adopting evil ways,
Forgetful of the works of Whom he sings the praise.

The HARP of PROPHECY

Hoarse rolled the thunder down the rocky steep,
As lambent lightnings on its granite play;
And wondering Horeb echoed back the deep
Voice of its God on that terrific day;
In smoke and fire did Sinai homage pay,
As the portentous trumpet moved with awe
The shuddering tribes, observant in array,
Capped with a cloud the blazing mountain saw;
And quaked beneath the fiat of a fiery law.

LEVITICUS

How shall erratic men be reckoned just
By Him who loathes the germ of latent sin?
Imputed innocence was Israel's trust,
Mourning entire depravity within.
Not gory hecatombs might lave him clean,
Who failed to see in them the promised Seed;
High priests with blood the Holiest entered in
Ere labouring consciences were fully freed;
And thus, to ransom man the Lamb of God must bleed.

NUMBERS

With wonder we unfold historic truth,
And stroll the track of time with pensive tread,
Marking its mile-stones, both in age and youth,
Long ages levelled with the dreamy dead,
And pause to ask, Have they for ever fled?
Returning but to snatch their native clay
From earth, for untold centuries its bed,
Or, things material changed, prolong their stay,
When solar rays are needless to perpetual day?

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

Happy the man whose faith has overcome,
Basing his trust upon the promise true,
Forty long years did wayward Israel roam,
The long sought land at times revealed to view,
Their faith too small to seize the treasure due;
Forgetful still, who oft beheld the Arm
Omnipotent their falling foes pursue,
Forbidding plagues or death to do them harm,
Or bade them dare a yawning deep without alarm.

Dejected Israel, weary of the way,
(A tortuous course o'er Araby's parched plain,)
Beheld at Meribah that Arm in play
Which plagued their foes, and brought them through the main;
Their thirst assuaged, the people still complain;
Numbers by fiery serpents bitten, died;
Yet Heaven displayed its mercy once again,
When each aloft the brazen serpent spied,
That crude effective symbol of the Crucified.

But lo, the heights of Moab break in song,
Heaven's care is not removed, nor patience spent;
Goodly thy tents, oh, Jacob, spread along
The valleys from receding heathens rent;
No longer shall those hosts be marshalled pent
Within the crowded camp, for Jacob's Star
In Israel's glorious Sceptre shall be sent;
Kingdoms now totter to the trump of war,
Since Judgement leads the van in her triumphal car.

The HARP of PROPHECY

DEUTERONOMY

Happy art thou, O, favoured Israel,
Who is like to thee, a flock divinely strong,
What nation upon earth could ever tell
The prodigies that to thy history belong,
High culminations point thy sacred song,
Jeshurun's God, thy sword of excellence,
Who on the heavens in thy support did ride,
The Everlasting Arms thy sure defence,
Which may a river, or a sea at will divide.

Ere Moses died, he viewed from Pisgah's hight
The Land of Promise; then had struck his time;
Though, after six score years, his lucid sight
And vigourous frame were potent as in prime;
No stone, nor towering cairn allowed to climb
To mark the tomb unique of one who knew
The Almighty face to face, nor knell nor chime
Might ring his requiem, as honour due
One buried by his God, apart from human view.

JUDGES

Strong in reliance upon heavenly aid,
By one, a thousand shall be put to flight,
Jabin, nine hundred iron chariots made,
And twenty years did Israel feel his might;
Low, bleeding lies a crested Canaanite;
Bold Sisera by a woman's hand is slain;
And startling trumpets swell in fitful light,
As Midian flees before three hundred men,
Wrestling with the swords of God, and Gideon in vain.

The HARP of PROPHECY

Favoured by Heaven, though ever apt to stray
Far from its laws, so like erratic man;
Samson arose, the Ajax of his day,
With prowess nurtured in the camp of Dan,
Whose crushing grasp the lion's jaws could span,
Or heap a thousand foes upon the field;
Hear Gaza's gates clank lumbering from his hand,
Cords crack as threads, withes wither as they yield,
Ere Dagon's teeming temple from its pillars reeled.

SAMUEL

The lamp still glimmered in the holy tent,
When youthful Samuel heard with tingling ears
Heaven's sentence waiting those on folly bent,
And Ichabod summed up all old Eli's fears;
A prophet mourns with unavailing tears
Saul's daring disobedience; but is sent
With sacred oil to one of tender years;
Too late, presuming monarchs may relent,
When Heaven has from their hand the ill-used sceptre rent.

But for integrity in Davids heart,
His throne had crumbled to the passing wind;
In Rehoboam's reign did Israel part,
'Neath Jeroboam's impious rule they sinned;
But hard the path, soon all transgressors find,
See human bones on Bethel's altar smoke;
A prophet's falsehood victimize his kind;
Baasha's line bereft of friend or folk;
Or, Syria's sons aggressive levelled at a stroke.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

KINGS

A hairy Tishbite once to Ahab came
Fortelling famine; neither rain nor dew
Might cheer a land which honoured Baal's name,
His prophets many, and the faithful few;
One at the vineyard, and at Carmel, true;
Desponding driven to Horeb's cave, alone,
That still small voice commissioned him anew,
No fear nor favor in his duty shown,
When crime was made to cower, though nurtured on a throne.

The Seer Elisha viewed with anxious eye
Heavens glowing chariot on his masters wait;
Whose transferred mantle Jordan's waters fly;
Whose Spirit raised the stricken Shunamite;
The Syrian's shame to blanch the servant white;
Causes a king a helpless host to spare,
(Since foiled the artful network of the night;)
Nought may avail against Jehovah's care,
While mountains move with armies at a prophet's prayer.

ESTHER

In warmth we turn in vain the sacred page
To mate this wicked Haman's dark design;
For slight of one, to gratify his rage,
Dreamed to destroy the whole Semitic line;
When queenly charms were made to countermine
The gory scheme, gain from the startled king
To change the Median law, which else were fine,
That royal mandate, and the fatal ring,
Which made so many thousands die, and Haman swing.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

PSALMS

Moved by a master hand the conscious lyre
Bends to its duty, like a living thing;
As Israel's Psalmist with prophetic fire,
Lifts everlasting doors to Glory's King,
Whose right hand guides the morning's errant wing,
Yet guards the meek, secure as Zion's hill;
High let the cymbals sound, His praises ring
From pole to pole, till heaven the echoes fill,
And creatures know no law save their Creator's will.

Why rage the rabble? Why should envy move
Earth's petty powers, and prompt them to ally?
Since Zion's King subdues the heart with love,
Though the begotten Son of God Most High;
Be wise ye mortals, nor His arm defy,
Who moulds at will the pot, or mars the clay,
Yet more delights to hear the contrite cry;
Let Jew and Gentile then speed on the day
When thrones terrestrial pale before Messiah's sway.

High heaven declares the grandeur of its God;
Boundless immensity His mighty hand,
Instructing planets in the stellar code,
Or microcosms within a grain of sand;
Vast orbs unseen revolve at His command,
To do his bidding, and enforce His laws
Ten thousand thousand angels waiting stand,
Finite to infinite progressive draws,
And prompts dull nature to adore one common cause.

The HARP of PROPHECY

Bless thou the Lord, my soul, and all within
This tabernacle magnify His name;
Whose stable covenant will cancel sin,
Who makes thy virulent diseases tame;
Considers kindly our ephemeral frame,
Sporting primeval beauty like a flower,
Which adverse winds bear early from the stem;
Paternal pity shortens sorrow's hour,
Or points the cheerless children to a sheltering tower.

Though old, I once was young, the Psalmist said,
Yet worth to want I've never wedded seen;
Plenty adorns the path the pious tread,
The sappy root sustains the foliage green;
Thus, sane the body and the soul serene;
Strong though the wicked, like the bay may spread,
Truth outraged veils the spot where he has been;
While peace surrounds the dying Christain's head,
Whose nobler life is dawning as he joins the dead.

CHRONICLES

Unfettered by the bournless azure dome
Man fitly piles his Maker's footstool high,
With temples, stately as a princely home,
Yet few in splendor may with Salem's vie;
Nor need they, since the sinner's contrite cry,
In Zion's gates, or Jacob's dwellings heard,
Will ever find responsive succour nigh,
The Omnipresent faithful to His word,
Which runs, "Their hearts shall ever live who seek the Lord."

The HARP of PROPHECY

PROVERBS

Blessed is the fragrant memory of the just ;
But wicked names fast hasten to decay ;
Better in wisdom, than in gold to trust,
The Lord will hearken when the upright pray ;
The wise will then to Him commit his way,
Who closer than a brother is a friend ;
But thorns may pierce the wicked as they stray,
Vice and its votaries in anguish end ;
While righteous paths to life and peace will ever tend.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and be wise ;
Provide in plenty's hour, for that of need ;
Nor from thy slumber so reluctant rise,
Lest want and poverty approach with speed ;
In labour there is profit ; sow thy seed,
Though Spring's receding waters snatch a part ;
For riches are life's ransom, as we read ;
Yet guard with careful diligence the heart,
Since from its portals frail, the vital stream must dart.

SONG OF SOLOMON

I am the Rose of Sharon ; rise my love,
The winter now is past, the flowers appear ;
The birds of song, led by the turtle dove,
The air perfumed with frankincense and myrrh,
Court thy decent from Hermon, and Shenir ;
How fair my Spouse, my ravished heart must own ;
With jewelled shoes how beautiful her feet ;
Whither is the fairest among women gone ?
In galleries of the King, Beloved, let us meet.

The HARP of PROPHECY

The voice of my Beloved, Behold Him come,
Leaping upon the mountains, like a hart;
Among his garden's lilies let Him roam,
The Chief among ten thousand; O my heart,
To vineyards let us hie, and gather some
Mandrakes; spices and pleasant fruits bring home
For my Beloved, whose I am, and He
Is gone to gather lilies, and to see
If worthy are the flowers and fruits to bring to me.

ISAIAH

Against Chaldea's glory word is gone,
Complete as Sodom's is its overthrow;
Destruction's besom sweeps old Babylon;
That golden City, terror of the foe;
Victorious Medes will bring her music low,
Till the lone terrace echoes to the owl,
And sedge-screened bitterns stalk the pools below,
While stealthy leopards, and lank jackals howl
As lions bear away the product of their prowl.

Frown, O, ye heavens; blush parent Earth, to hear
Even brutes termed grateful when compared with man;
The curbes of Providence too vague appear
To check the fool, or change his reckless plan;
Still could Isaiah in the vista scan
A glorious Rod shoot forth from Jesse's stem,
When babes might linger by the adder's den,
Or lead the lion by his diadem,
Lambs sport with wolves, beneath the Star of Bethlehem.

The HARP of PROPHECY

The wilds, and lonely places, shall be glad,
Rejoicing deserts blossom as the rose;
Hope realized shall nerve the weak and sad,
And eyes obscure, wake from their dark repose;
The deaf, the lame, the dumb their cures disclose,
Pressing the perfect way to Zion's gate,
Untrod by the unclean, but raised for those,
No beast shall pass, no lions lie in wait,
As saints bear crowns of joy to their immortal state.

JEREMIAH

To spare a people honoured with God's care,
Long did Hilkiab's son with Judah plead;
Though billowed oceans owned His sandy bar,
Revolting man proved a rebellious seed;
For this, Heaven's heated fury marched with speed
O'er young and old, the prophet and the priest,
Then Human flesh in Hinnom's vale should feed
To savage plenitude, both fowl and beast,
Till desolation reigned, and mirth and gladness ceased.

How sad was Salem; dim her finest gold;
Burned were her gates; her walls in ruins lay;
Her people exiled captives, as foretold,
Proud Palestina, bent to foreign sway,
Quaffed gall and wormwood to the dregs that day;
Foxes unharmed on Zion's Mountain stroll,
And the Most High abhorred His sanctuary;
Then Judah's Harp was hung with sickened soul
Untuned, where willows weep, and Babel's rivers roll.

The HARP of PROPHECY

The day will dawn, proclaims the sacred page,
When Sinai's legal Covenant shall expire;
And one of grace bring in the golden age,
And motives pure the heart of men inspire;
God's innate law supplant the base desire,
No more His tired ambassadors shall teach,
Salvation shall be known from son to sire,
Waft on the ocean breeze from beach to beach,
And men aspire to practice as they cease to preach.

EZEKIEL

On Chebars's banks Ezekiel saw the fire
Which cleansed Jerusalem; and prostrate fell,
Whelmed by the glare of the Shechinal car,
As the Supreme deputed him to tell,
Whether to ears which listen, or rebel,
One fated third should plague and famine claim,
The trump of war would sound a second's knell,
The remnant, to all lands, a nation's shame
Must bear in exile, Chased by Heaven's avenging flame.

'Tis done; One saw the bones of Israel spread
Dry as the dust the pressed, along the vale;
When, touch creative thrilled the silent dead,
Bones sought their fellows through the clattering dale;
Flesh formed anew around its tenter-rail,
Then spirit reared the marshaled, living wave,
Thus, though the barren hope of Jacob fail,
The Lord Omnipotent will deign to save,
And fill His favoured land with people from the grave.

The HARP of PROPHECY

DANIEL

Heard ye that music on the eastern wind?
Aurora's song attends the orient sun,
'Twas Judah's hallowed Harp, whose strains confined
Streamed o'er the stately walls of Babylon;
The golden image which in Dura shone,
The monarch beast, the glowing furnace blaze,
The lion's den, the signet and the stone,
Taught, like the unclaimed hand, that human ways
Are weighed by One who shields the meek and may
the proud abase.

Pleasing as painful was the scene sublime,
When age, with age remote, was made to blend;
While Heaven uncoiled the scroll of coming time,
Thrones, other thrones reluctant glory lend;
Successive powers exhaustive prowess spend,
Battling for lasting eminence in vain,
Till one is fixed, unknown to change or end,
Clouds are His honoured seat, Earth His domain,
And the Most High inaugurates Messiah's reign.

H O S E A

Ephraim proved fickle as the silly dove.
Rejected, as the clammy cake unturned;
Inconstant Judah's was a fitful love,
And fruitless Israel, ready to be burned;
Yet pity moved the heart of Him they spurned,
Hence, out of Egypt Had He called His Son;
Ephraim from Him the fondling step had learned,
Both yet should bloom like lilies 'neath the sun,
Or spread like lofty cedars upon Lebanon.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

JOEL

The graphic Joel drew with limner's touch
His insect army, closing with the foe;
Time, save in Egypt, never noted such,
May penitential tears avert the woe?
Loud let the warning trump in Zion blow;
The gentle bride repulsive sack-cloth wear,
And even sucklings sustenance forego;
Winefats will overflow, and figtrees bear,
When Zion's mourning children to their God repair.

In latter days shall be, said the Supreme,
My Spirit poured on all the human race;
The young shall prophesy, the old shall dream,
Each bosom glow with intellect and grace;
Assenting skies assume a conscious face,
Proud Earth in tremors, sport her worthy load,
Darting eccentric through untravelled space;
Lost then the sun, the hurried moon be blood,
As dawns the final, grand, decisive day of God.

AMOS

To second cause, apt is man to trace
Apparent ills, which kindly hedge the way;
And needs Tekoah's Seer, or Balaam's ass,
To herald Heaven's gloved finger, day by day;
Turning death's shadow to the morning ray;
That Mind which wills each City wet or dry,
Stupendous constellations mute obey,
Swinging in complex cycles through the sky;
Israel, prepare to meet the God you dare defy.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

By whom shall Jacob rise for he is small?
Let justice dwell again within his gate?
Let judgment flow as waters to their fall;
And rills of righteousness cleanse every street;
Then Salem's noble temple glad shall greet
The grateful worshipper; the laden vine,
And golden field, on every hand will meet
The hurried husbandman; rich valleys shine,
While mellow hills will melt, and mountains gush with wine.

O B A D I A H

Though Obadiah with prophetic sight,
Described among the stars, proud Edom's nest,
Justice retributive had marked his flight,
And Jacob's wrong shall surely be redressed;
Fraternal love ne'er throbbed within his breast;
Stern the unfeeling seed, the harvest stern;
His hand had lent no succour in distress,
No brother's arm would shield him in return,
When Jacob would be fire, Esau as stubble burn.

J O N A H

Observe deluded Jonah step on board
The ship for Tarshish bound, contented sleep;
Dreaming to shun an Omnipresent Lord,
Who frowned a tempest on the troubled deep;
Pride thus austere, might make a Seraph weep;
Perish a million souls, to prove one wise;
Let cities sink, but spare the gourd to keep
The prophet cool, and shade those zealous eyes,
Peering to read portentous fury in the skies.

The HARP of PROPHECY

MICAH

Declare it not in Gath, that Israel's trust
Is the dumb stock, idolatry his sin;
Rise and depart, ye holy pure and just,
No rest nor safety in a land unclean;
Where hireling priests, and prophets mocking lean
On God, and say, "Is He not with us yet?"
For this, where Zion's glory late was seen,
The plow shall revel, save by ruins let;
And studded forest wave, where now her temple's set.

Rejoice not over me mine enemy;
Lost in the gloom of sorrow, and of night;
Righteous was the hand which humbled me,
Which, timely yet will gladden me with light;
Observant nations tremble at the sight;
Closed be their taunting mouths, when God's decree
To show his wasted heritage His might,
In grace and glory shall proclaim them free,
Hurling their sin-stained shackles in a shoreless sea.

Then shall appear upon the holy hill
Its sacred sanctuary; there reverent flow
Admiring throngs the hallowed courts to fill;
From little Bethlehem shall the Ruler go
To deal the serpents head the promised blow,
So long designed in the Eternal will;
Then will renewed humanity forego
That fiendish frenzy moving man to kill,
And martial weapons reek not with the blood they spill.

The HARP of PROPHECY

NAHUM

Here will I make thy grave, for thou art vile;
O, Nineveh; the wicked, strong, and proud;
Thy ruined towers, thy monumental pile,
Oblivion weaves thy mystic pall and shroud;
Cruel the crashing carnage; long and loud
Brayed murderous battle down the bellowing street;
Till red the sullied shield, and corpses crowd
The bloody City, cleansed with vengeance meet
For Him who rides the storm, as clouds bedew His feet.

HABAKKUK

Woe to the murderer, who lays in gore
A city's base, besots his friend, or he
Whose monitory walls, betraying store
Unjustly his, reprove him orally;
Plain is the vision writ, contented be,
Robbed though the righteous, and the felon free,
Too pure is Heaven to own iniquity;
By faith the just shall live, who yet will see
Earth filled with truth divine, as waters do the sea.

God came from Teman; power beamed from His side,
Skies sang His glory, and the Earth His might;
On chariots of salvation did He ride,
Clad with the lustre of celestial light;
Astounded paused the orbs of day and night,
As He redeemed the people of His choice;
Should figtrees fail to bloom, and fatal blight
Seize vine and olive, still their humble voice
Would praise the Rock of their salvation, and rejoice.

The HARP of PROPHECY

ZEPHANIAH

The Lord at length a sacrifice prepared,
Insatiate conquest was the bidden guest ;
His candle's gleam Jerusalem's sins declared,
Even skeptic thought detected in the breast ;
Like wolves, her princes mangled the oppressed ; .
Treacherous and trifling were her prophets found ;
The temple desecrated by the priest ;
Dark though the day, 'twas well even wrath should bound
Crimes deeply dyed as those for which a world was drowned.

Philistia too, would reap the penal fruit
Of wanton wickedness ; till sheep would graze
Her mouldering cities, open to the brute ;
Lone shepherd's tents would dot the shrubby maze,
Flocks fold in citadels of former days ;
While Moab and Assyria with Ammon share
Dull Desolation, and their dolesome ways
Breed nettles ; wild beasts answer from the lair,
The call of cormorants upon the morning air.

HAGGAI

Mark the sealed mansion of the selfish Jew ;
Nor visit fears of the avenging rod,
Though sacred stones lie scattered in the dew,
Mossing imbedded in the mountain sod.
Mine are the silver and the gold, saith God ;
Go rebel man, revere my sovereign care ;
Soon heaven and earth shall shudder at my nod,
Let willing hands rebuild My house of prayer,
And glory shall attend the Hope of Nations there.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

Z E C H A R I A H

Strange are the warblings wild of Judah's Lyre,
As Zechariah undulates the trill;
Tripping at times from Zion's wall of fire,
To the red horse below the myrtled hill;
Or shows the mortal his incongruous will;
Forms his sole bar to pardon, and to bliss,
Removed, his peace Euphrates banks might fill,
Or ocean waves describe his righteousness;
When, as in grace designed, would man his Maker bless.

The Prince of darkness, fired with malice foul,
Hied from the murky regions of despair;
Preferring title to an ill-clad soul,
Snatched from his flames, and crowned with comely care;
But He who chose Jerusalem was there;
Whose Branch will cleanse a nation in a day;
Then fellow-men one common love will share;
Not might, but Spirit will precede His sway,
And hearts of adamant shall crumble as the clay.

Then will a fountain spring for the impure,
Life-giving waters from Jerusalem run;
God's people 'neath His rule will dwell secure,
All nations serve Him, and His name be One,
Smite, then Oh, sword, My Shepherd, and My Son,
Whose blood redeems the prisoner from the pit;
Monarch and priest, He'll sit upon His throne,
Mount Olivet will sunder at His feet,
And Zion's lowly King prolonged hosannas greet.

The HARP *of* PROPHECY

MALACHI

With Edom's barren mountains full in view,
The Jew presents his puny offering;
Levi's base seed his covenant undo,
Though priestly lips should pious knowledge bring;
Rulers would spurn the desecrating thing;
Rejecting God, the same in turn be done;
The grateful Gentile will His glory sing,
All shall adore Him, His redemption known,
And valued, from the rising to the setting sun.

Behold Elijah's spirit, and his power,
Wrapped in the hair, the girdle, and the zeal,
Herald the advent of that serching hour,
That test and scrutiny, whence no appeal;
The Sun of Righteousness draws near to seal
His hopeful jewels; while the greedy flame
Compels the vicious, and the proud to feel
The prize is lost, and late respect the claim
Of those who fear the Lord, and think upon His name.

A Briton's Venture in Canada in 1823



IN MEMORIAM



THOS. KENT
LONDON, ONTARIO

Canada in 1860

Crude though our land be, bold are some to say,
She ranks the purest of the present day;
Perforce, says one, should Cain destroy a brother,
He haply travels far to find another;
But be this as it may, the golden rule
Is precept taught in pulpit, and in school;
Hence, should Canadians act on what they hear,
Our practical Millenium is near.

While foreigners deride our frigid lot,
Classing with ills what we consider not;
Let Boreas drift deep snows athwart the moor,
Which half engulf the cottage of the boor;
Though seven months of the year the frosts prevail,
And Ursa Major fans us with her tail;
While we require our ears insured to stir,
And nestle in a cutter wrapped in fur;
Even thus the thread of life is gaily spun,
In search of bliss, beneath a tangent sun.

With rivers solid as the seal of fate,
With rail-trains blocked betimes, and often late;
The summer's yield consumed in winter's reign,
And freezing fingers prompt us to camplain,
Long as the smiles of Providence are sent
To cheer our homes with plenty and content;
From foreign and domestic broils we steer,
And Ceres crowns the cycle of the year;
We envy not though warmer suns may set,
And choose septentrional lotus yet.

Should Spring and Autumn mainly slip from view,
Protracted Winters brings us Summer too;
Not our's to linger Idalian bowers,
Or quaff the perfume of the land of flowers,
Unfraught with odours of an eastern strand,
Pure are the winds that brush our wooded land;
Which tempt the rose of vigour to the cheek,
Which nerve the healthy, and revive the weak;
Assuring as they pass with hissing mouth,
To screen us from the scourges of the South.

So through the centuries to a distant day,
May prosper Canada, as hoped she may,
Well-based her boughs symetrically shoot,
A worthy scion of a noble root.
Dame Nature has done much to found a realm
Which with a skilful Pilot at the helm,
Should one day don a grand imperial robe,
And prove a power and presence on the globe.

Her mountains may with glittering Alps compare,
Her landscapes with intrinsic beauty rare,
Her continental bounds enclose vast fields
Graced with the stores a varied climate yields,
Her lakes are seas, her rivers veins of trade,
With fruitful vales perhaps as ever made;
Her forests stately, whence the spars are hurled
To float the commerce of near half the world.

In education, eager to aspire,
Our land presents, what others might admire,
A staff of scholars vouching for her schools,

Her Patent-list, at least methodic fools,
Bids to sustain a creditable part
Upon the field of letters, and of art,
With taste and architecture budding fast,
With mines, though undeveloped, not the last;
Far as the weary eye may range her plain,
Rich is the view with promise, or with grain;

Her fleet imposing finds divergent way
To shores remote, and braves the briny spray
Of every ocean, her proverbial cod,
And teeming seals have long been known abroad;
Her towns aspire to cities, native wealth
Accumulates with noticeable stealth;
All seems progressive, the Dominion bebt
We dont except, though indisposed to fret;
Since such is custom, and assumed to speak
A country's credit, and commercial cheek.

Should Canada not ape aggressive Rome,
Still, here may future millions find a home,
See fortune's every feature but her frown,
Nor envy Cesar of his red renown;
Her calm historian smile in coming years
O'er bugbear doubts, anticipating fears,
Dwelling with pleasing pride upon his theme,
Which shadowed now might savour of a dream.

Trusting our palaces our fancies build
Upon Elysian fields, may be fulfilled;
Expanding hopes, though measurably grand,
Heaven's favour send upon our youthful land;

Her ruler, prove a senate may be made
In which the power reposed, is not betrayed;
Her people happy, prosperous, and free,
Till tolls the knell of time; So mote it be.

Ode to Flowers

Sweet flowers; acme of beauty, who inspire
The meditative mind with hope and love;
Wooing the vulgar, baser thought to higher;
The earth-born, to the nobler fields above.

How fragrant and bewildering the field,
To those who ramble through the brilliant hues
Bespangled botany may amply yield,
Till cloyed the sight, amid the festal views.

To you we owe the captivating touch
Of those excelling in the arts refined;
Who aim at grace they find admired so much,
And thus to charm and elevate mankind.

Your powers of prepossession, guilers meek,
The fair sex, wily and quicksighted, long have seen
Blooming in effigy upon the lady's cheek,
When winter's blast has bleached the hardy green.

Oh! how transporting on midsummer's eve,
To stroll the flower-girt path with pensive step,
On to the airy bower, where zephyrs weave
Their odoriferous shroud, and fall asleep.

Gay flowers; unconscious hand-work of a Power
Who wields a complex nature at His will;
Willed to express perfection in a flower;
Alone in Eden's normal glory glowing still.

Under an Oak

Thick though the earth is thronged with conscious clay,
The fatal shaft assails in every clime;
Death stalks so many avenues for prey,
He leaves light gleanings for the scythe of Time.

Respect, we crave, the relics of a pair,
Whose span was lengthened, yet whose sands have run;
Man's mortal lot unitedly here share,
Who sojourned half a century as one.

By the black railing, and the sculptured stone,
Rapt, musing on the present, and the past,
One's reverie assumes historic tone,
Oft thrown on what preceded, by the last.

There lies my father, and my mother here;
Grass revels o'er them, and the flowers make mirth;
Yet, faith in them was victor over fear;
Scarce left regret in passing from the earth.

'Tis here we seem to run life's course again;
While those long missed enliven still the scene;
Backward the buoyant fancy soars the plain;
As memory deals with objects which have been.

To those matured beneath paternal care,
Few things with all our past, will intertwine
Close as the Sire whose guardianship we share;
Or paradigm of mothers, as was mine.

'Till the chill frost of age, resistless nigh,
Natives of Albion, oft would they recall
Their scenes of early life, with brightened eye,
Of Barton, Alrewas, Orgrave, and its Hall.

Stern the parental love which moved the heart
To waive the claims of country and of kind,
Hope nerved them for the struggle, though they part
For ever from the friends they leave behind.

Painful the parting when the ties are strong,
Which culminate in one long last adieu;
The anchor rises to the sailors' song,
When Bristol's towers grow dim upon the view.

Quebec

Let us rest on the rock known as Canada's Key,
Where Britain's proud colours a century wave,
Where the mighty St. Lawrence first kisses the sea,
And the hights were once slape with the blood of the brave.

Does the spirit of Wolfe amid danger so calm,
Stroll at night the plateau, and precipitous steep?
In search of the shade of the courtly Montcalm,
To salute o'er the spot where each fell upon sleep.

How many have lingered on Abraham's Plain?
Recalling in fancy its carnage and strife,
Re-peopling its sward with the host of the slain,
Who, loyal to duty, were lavish of life.

Firmly Britain's battalions awaited the blow,
As the tri-coloured banner led on the advance,
Where Saxon and Gale met a chivalrous foe
In that spirited corps of the soldiers of France.

Forty paces asunder their serried lines formed,
Soon the death dealing volleys their shattered ranks lower,
Till the pibroch and slogan the Highlanders warmed,
When they triumphed in charge, as in battles of yore.

Now leaving those heroes to rest as they may,
And History's page, all their glory to tell;
We descend that peculiar, circuitous way,
To the tablet and spot where Montgomery fell.

To this noble cape may its beacon afar,
Guide a prosperous commerce which nothing may check;
And the heavy guns never more thunder in war,
Which sleep in the Citadel crowning Quebec.

Citadel, July 1st, 1868.

Bon Voyage

Launched in Quebec-bound brig whose gallant prow,
O'er billows led their undulating way;
The Atlantic foamed in tempests, then as now;
And landsmen sickened in her sportive spray.

Here let us note an epoch in the arts;
Scarce steam then stemmed the river or the main;
Thus more remote would seem the distant parts,
Since, closely linked by telegraph, and train.

Our age saw science with adventurous hand,
Lash these trained fiends to her progressive car;
Nor eased the rein 'till speech the ocean spanned;
When lightening brought a whisper from afar.

Seven tedious weeks of elemental strife,
Where petrels listen to the sea-sick moan;
A pensive parent with a weakly wife,
Saw them safe-landed on a shore unknown.

Well-pleased once more to press the stable earth;
Yet brief the term allotted to their rest;
With course turned from the country of their birth,
Resume again the journey to the west.

At length arriving at the point desired;
Such self-sought isolation well is borne;
From the caprices of the world retired;
Beyond the pale of envy or of scorn.

Time saw them dwelling by the river's side,
Plodding with patience through a path of toil;
Hemmed in by studded forests, dark and wide;
Ranged by the stealthy panther and his spoil.

The wilds then echoed to the plaintive call
Of the lone fawn, or pheasants early drum;
Bears, wolves and foxes held high carnival;
Loath to aggressive inroads to succumb.

The squirrel gamboled in the fruitful oak;
The pigeon swayed upon the cherry's limb.
The crow returned the raven's hollow croak;
The osprey feared the eagle watching him.

The Charms of Solitude

The loon, the sturgeon peopled then the streams;
The thickets thridded by the bounding deer;
Raccoons retreated to their trees for dreams:
The blundering bear might forage without fear.

Oft too was heard the wild-goose on the wing;
The startled pheasant whirled its short-lived flight;
The whippoorwill at eve would vespers sing;
The owl presided o'er sepulchral night.

Then hung the native grape in festoons high;
Beneath, the cranberry and crimson plum;
While gently zephyrs through the copses sigh;
And cuckoos moan until their mates have come.

So amply were his simple wants supplied,
The smoke-proof Indian dreamed his days at will;
Stretched in his wigwam, by the streamlet's side;
Discarding care, he shared his greasy fill.

Free from all ties political and social,
No fear acknowledged and small friendship felt;
Content to deem his muskrat dried, ambrosial;
His state attire, a blanket and a belt.

The civilizing hand of industry then felled
The oak, the maple, and the lofty elm;
Till the coy inmates of the wood rebelled
In rash reprisals for their threatened realm.

Thus, varied fast the hardship and the toil,
Inevitable to those who early settle,
In a rude region, to subdue the soil;
A test severe to muscle and to mettle.

Streams, lacking bridges; corn without a mill;
Wants without limit, and without supply;
Disease without physicians, through whose skill
The patient may recover; or——may die.

With savages for neighbours, save a few
Whites at long intervals, nor roads connecting
Those few together, never them to you;
Are circumstances some might deem dejecting.

'Tis also true, the rustic claims immunities
From forms conventional, and rules absurd;
Imposed by fashion on communities,
Who dread her censure, as they might a sword.

Reflections

Improvement follows effort as a sequel;
The darkest hour may usher in the day;
In one regard the high and low are equal;
The proud should be content, the humble may.

At length, encouraged by the crude success,
A hamlet first and thence a city rose,
Rearing its temple in a wilderness;
Improving morals and refining clothes.

Society, the green-house of humanity;
Where each capacity seems forced in growth;
Vice vies with virtue; madness with urbanity;
Extremes contrasted tend to highten both.

Much as our race owes to the fond anxiety,
The parent for the child, can ill control;
It glows with warmer earnestness, where piety
Appreciates the importance of the soul.

Through simple means, though no distinguished standing,
In ethics nor divinity appears;
Saved oft times is the youthful bark from stranding,
By beacons, hallowed by a mother's tears.

Is there a spot where moving memories cluster,
Or where the licensed dew the eye may lave?
Where thoughts obtain, which lend to life a lustre,
Like those which gather at a parent's grave.

Decades have rolled, and still one's fancy lingers,
Around the ingle and the home once dear;
Prize yet the product of parental fingers;
And cherish fondly what they valued here.

That era passed; the busy hand of art,
Has brushed the sylvan features from the scene;
Most mortals now, who then sustained a part
In life's strange drama, lie below the green.

And thus, to nearly all things sublunary,
Some culmination better form induces;
Oft such inductions are resisted, very;
As often, such resistance has its uses.

Thus, eighty years have placed the Forest City,
Where pine-woods muffed the Indian's stinging yell;
Which nature's devotees pronounce a pity;
And rashly wish they might revoke the spell.

Ruminations on Eschatology

Revolving Time, his cyclometric thrust,
Stays not for sage's sigh, nor poet's lay;
One saddened week, consigned them both to dust;
Where all must mingle with a kindred clay.

"In shure and certain hope," the pastor said,
A dark assemblage placed them in the tomb;
Green be the sward upon their lowly bed,
'Till the last trump proclaims the dawn of doom.

Their canopy, the foliage of an oak;
A mute Thames-seeking rill meanders by;
Long have they slumbered in this quiet nook;
Still long here unmolested, may they lie.

Brief though the term of our constricted stay,
Nor strength, nor station may extend the chain;
On retrospect, will saint or cynic say,
Much of his past has not been spent in vain.

Thus transient is the tenure we possess,
Of all that blesses or embitters life;
Three score and ten the limit, often less,
Determines this probationary strife.

We start to hear the doleful passing-bell;
And pause to ask some traveller, Who is gone?
Relieved to find 'tis not for him the knell
Booms from the latticed tower; and hurries on.

Lessons thus thrilling, leave but little trace,
Like keels in water, or as wings in air;
The element resumes its wonted place;
The throngs continue stirring, as they were.

Yet, who arraigns the wisdom in our lot?
Who would live away, in a pseudo state?
Once born, we live, we die, and are forgot;
'Till "small and great" are summoned to their fate.

How seemly then, with perishable breath,
To honour Him who deigned the vile to save;
Whose merit has removed the sting of death;
Who bore the palm in triumph from the grave.

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Kent, Thomas
The harp of prophecy

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